### Only.

Only a word for the Master,
Lovingly, quietly said;
Only a word,
Yet the Master heard,
And some fainting hearts were fed.

Only a look of remonstrance,
Sorrowful, gentle, and deep;
Only a look,
Yet the strong man shook,
And he went alone to weep.

Only some act of devotion,
Willingly, joyfully done;
"Surely 'twas naught"
(So the proud world thought),
But yet souls to Christ are won.

—Sel.

### System.

By system we mean regular method or order. Success is never accomplished without system. Financiers are men of system. If perchauce some one blunders into financial success, it is because, system has cast itself in his way. Just think of a bank being run without regular method or order. Would it not soon be "run in the ground?"

What would the experienced and successful farmer think of one who would conclude that he could make farming a success by operating in a "helter-skelter" manner? Who would ever become successful as a mechanic without systems? What merchant would not soon go into bankruptcy by irregular buying and selling? Would a man in the avenue of politics be trusted who would not be willing to operate systematically? Just think of a school room without system. What a Babel you would have! Just think of a man undertaking to solve a mathematical problem, without system. Would the names of such men as Napoleon Bonaparte, Wellington, Blucher, Washington, and Grant, *et al*, come to us in the grandeur of martial lustre, as they do, had they undertaken to control and lead their armies without system? Who would trust himself to travel on a railroad operated without system? What more shall I say? Is not God the author of system? Does he not, in both natural and revealed law place the highest symbol of perfection on system? Does he not control the physical universe by regular method or orders? Did he not in the creation of earth, and that which partains to it, proceed in the most systematic manner possible? Does he not in the plan of redemption present himself to man in his threefold character, in regular order? Do not the means of grace come to us developed in regular order?

Does not inspiration teach the necessity of "walking by the same rule?" Are not bible instructions on church goverement *all* based on the great principle—system? I am writing on the principle that a "word to the wise is sufficient." I present these interrogations, argumentatively in the affirmative. The proofs would be too elaborate for these pages; but they being so very intense in their nature, I think the reader will at once comprehend them. The application I wish to make of the facts, concerning system is comprehended in the fact, that the Brethren church needs more systematic operation. Otherwise, like everything else, operated without system, it must fail of success. You might as well undertake to run a planning mill, a threshing machine, or a railroad engine without system as to run a church without it. System is the inevitable offspring of heaven and heaven's God. To think of running church machinery in a manner, which would cause heaven to dissolve, and the whole physical universe to fall to pieces, is an idea on which is written in the glaring letters of both human and divine intelligence—absurdity.

Oh, brethren, we must have system, or in God's proper time see the pen of heaven move upon the wall and write "*Tekel*." The church needs system to make it attractive and home like. O how desolate the home of disarrangement. A lack of system in the household, mars its beauty, peace and attractiveness. A household may be ever so poor, but give it the grace of system and it is good to be there.

The ministry needs system. Every church goer stands a living witness to this. Paul says: "If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to battle?" Conglommeration should be avoided in the pulpit. Every undertaking requires preparation. God got everything ready before he created the universe. He gradually unveiled and perfected the scheme of human redemption, and surely, man is not wiser nor more skillful than God himself. Surely the dispenser of pulpit love, needs systematic preparation. Why, even the sinner cannot accept Christ as his Savior, in a saving sense without system. He must first believe, then repent, and then be baptized before he can lawfully claim Christ in a saving sense. Is it not then as clear as the noonday sun that we need system to equip our ministers for their holy, great, and responsible calling?

We need system, so that all may be enabled to share in both the duty and joy of doing the work of the church. In the matter of giving, which the Gospel recognizes as both a duty and a joy, we need system. Many stand aloof from this, simply because we lack in system to co-operate. How often we hear the complaint,—"A few must do all." In a certain sense, system means organization, and organization means system. We need methods upon which to operate and we need system as relates to the instruments through which to operate. The old proverb, "What is everybody's business is nobody's business" holds good in operating church machinery. We need system in mission work, not only in a general, but also in a local sense. In this important branch of church work, there must of necessity be mutual co-operation of a general character, in order to success, and this can only be effected by local or congregational mutual co-operation,—by a system to present the duty and privilege of lending a helping hand, to every church member.

We need system in our devotional exercises. No prayer meeting can be successfully operated without system. Every one should have his and her work assigned, just as we find it in all well regulated households. How disgusting, in the family, when proper authority tells Mary to do a certain work, and Mary says: "I don't like, or don't want to, you go and do it Susie." In the church of Christ there is a place for everything useful, and now we need system to keep everything in its place.

We need system in Sunday school work. A system which, though it may not compel, will impel every one to his or her duty ungrudgingly. This old preacher habit of ours, when behind the pulpit, "Now you be free, Now you be free," and then the one who is "free," get up in a kind of reluctant, lazy and burdensome manner, and worries the congregation with apologies, should be avoided. All should know their work and then do it to the best of their ability, with ready alacrity. You know Peter said to the lame man, "Such as I have, give I unto thee," and Paul said, they who gave should not do so "grudgingly." Hoping that our probable coming convention will aid us very much to get our church machinery in active, systematic operation. I subscribe myself your weak brother in Christ, favoring system from first to last.

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Morrill, Kans.

### Growing in Grace.

We have all doubtless noticed the growth of things of animation. They do not attain their growth all at once, but little by little.

In the case of plants, trees, &c., it takes a little time for the germ to throw out the fibres, then steadily it advances until a great monster is grown from a very little germ. Neither do the trees &c., shed their foliage all at once, neither does grain ripen at once, but little by little until the grain is hard enough for the mill-stone, then it is of use to man.

So it is in growing in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord, or in other words the Christian's growth. I have seen plants tenderly cared for; I have seen the young of beasts cared for, and I have seen parents more tenderly care for their children. Those of the plants were given the warm sunshine and they were given moisture. The young of the beasts were warmed, in some cases, by the fire in rough bleak days, and even given nourishment when too weak to take it themselves.

I have seen the father and mother even more tenderly care for their children—helped it up when fallen, carried in the arms of the parent or led by its hand; yet when sufficient time had passed, I have noticed these same plants and bodies care for themselves. They had grown to their natural stature.

We have seen children, plants and beasts that would grow but little under the most favorable circumstances. They were dwarfed or deformed or a disease of some kind was preying on their bodies. These same dwarfed and deformed bodies usually have dwarfed and deformed progeny. Now who loves a deformed body? or who loves deformed or illshaped objects of any kind? Of what especial use are they?

The Christian's growth is one of increase. If we are babes in Christ's fold by proper study of God's word and obedience to the same, we will become strong, strong enough to walk and even run the Christian's race, by the aid of God's word as our staff. And when we have borne the best fruits and when the harvest is ready, God will put the sickle into the field, cut down the harvest and gather the grain into the kingdom of heaven.

But there are some professing Christians dwarfed or deformed, one of the two or both, at least they grow but little or scarcely any at all. There seems to be some blight or disease or worm or canker that is eating the very life out of their being. Then too, many dwarfed Christian parents, produce the same kind of children, that is, the children partake of religion about as sparingly as their ancestors. Therefore the necessity of having large full developed Christians, so as to stamp out this deformity in religion.

Look into your orchard and see the thrifty, growing trees; what beautiful fruit they bear, and then see the fruit of those that have the worm or blight. Then look into the church and see the healthful growing Christian; what sweet scent their actions diffuse. It can be seen that God's Spirit has been and is now with that one. Look at the dwarfed, deformed Christian. See if he comes to the house of God once in three or six months but sits at home and contends that he is as good as those who forsake not the assembling of themselves together. Notice if they ever do a good deed or talk of God's goodness, only when pressed to by sickness or when some one mentions the same. Notice how sparingly they partake of and discuss religious matters; and at the first opportunity branch off to some other topic more suitable to their use.

Notice, and you will usually see this same deformity pay twenty-five, fifty cents, or one dollar to see an entertainment of some worldly kind and yet fail to attend church free of charge.

If the Scriptures required us to do anything to harm us or any one else, or if they required anything contrary to humane or moral laws, or if it cost anything other than our own spiritual co-operation with God, then we could have somewhat of an excuse to reject God's law. Or if the Bible taught us to do anything mean and degrading, we might be excusable in rejecting it; but on the contrary, every thing it teaches tends to elevate and place man on a higher plane. If all would conform to God's law, no other law would be required. For what other laws have the civilized countries but the fundament of God's law!

We all love the beautiful and good, and dislike the bad of whatever kind it may be. None of us like a balky horse.

Now if we expect God to love us or to keep in His favor, we should not balk so much, or fly back in the traces when we are expected to pull. To be consistent, if we love the good we should also be good.

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All the world is but as one orphanage, so long as its children know not God their Father; and all wisdom and knowledge is only more bewildered darkness so long as you have not taught them the fear of the Lord; not to be taken out of the world in monastic sorrow but to be kept from its evil in shepherded peace.—*Ruskin.*